

Copenhagen Airports turns a profit in Q3 after two years



Copenhagen Airports (CPH) has announced that for the first time since 2020, its posted a profit of DKK 234 million before tax for the third quarter and an overall profit for the first nine months of the year of DKK 221 million.

The billion-kroner debt built up due to COVID-19, however remains a challenge to the ambition to invest in the future.

“Despite renewed uncertainty fuelled by the energy crisis, war, inflation, and the risk of new COVID-19 variants, we expect a profit for the year in the DKK 125-225 million range. The aviation industry is emerging from the crisis despite several dark clouds looming on the horizon. Things are improving, but we are definitely not there yet,” says Thomas Woldbye, CEO at Copenhagen Airports.

CPH ended the third quarter of 2022 with a profit before tax of DKK 234 million, an improvement over the DKK 159 million Q2 profit and significantly better than the DKK 171 million loss reported for the first quarter.

“In the first two, extremely challenging, years of the pandemic, we accumulated a loss before tax just short of DKK 1.5 billion. Against that backdrop, our third quarter performance and the DKK 221 million profit for the first nine months of 2022 is satisfactory,” he adds.

Revenue for the third quarter landed at DKK 1,071 million, a 71% improvement on the same period of 2021. Total revenue for the nine-month period was DKK 2,621 million. This is still 21% below 2019, the last normal pre-pandemic year.

As noted in a press release published by Copenhagen Airports, terminals are seeing the return of traffic and investments for the year are expected to be approximately DKK 950-1,000 million.

Terminal activity & staff support

The terminals are once again busy as eight in ten travelers are back and new stores and restaurants have opened or reopened.

The route networks are also on the way to being restored. At the end of the third quarter, passengers were flown to and from 144 destinations, corresponding to index 89 compared with 2019. The passenger number is expected to reach 22 million by the end of 2022, compared with 30.3 million in 2019.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, Copenhagen Airports employed just under 2,700 people. After 800 redundancies and significant cost cuts, passengers began to return this year, and with them the need of staff support. Currently, the headcount at CPH is about 2,350.

“Airlines have regained a good foothold here at CPH, and many destinations are served by more than ¹

one carrier. We currently count 275 routes to 144 destinations – which is in fact a few more than before the pandemic. Also, the aircrafts are flying at close to full capacity again, with eight in ten seats being sold.

“We managed the rapid increase in flights and passengers this past spring and summer reasonably well and have hired more than 500 new employees,” comments Woldbye.

The growing desire to travel has created new positions throughout the airport. From the low point in September 2021, the number of employees at the nearly 1,000 businesses operating in and around the airport has grown by 3,300 from 12,800 to about 16,100 today.

“The airport is the base of one of Denmark’s largest financial ecosystems, and its value creation goes far beyond our own organisation. It is important for the Danish economy that the business is back up to speed. More than 3,300 jobs have been created in and around the airport in the past year” he explains.

Repaying & investing

In the first two years of the crisis, CPH borrowed a total of DKK 2.2 billion to keep the airports running and to make the necessary investments.

“We have to repay this debt and at the same time we need to be able to invest in the sustainable airport of the future and retain our position as an important northern European air traffic hub. That is a very big challenge.

“It is difficult to see how we can avoid becoming more expensive, if we are to be able to invest and repay the debt,” says Thomas Woldbye.

He emphasises that Copenhagen Airport must continue to have competitive prices.

“We still have ambitions to invest in the airport in the coming years, however, that will depend on our ability to do so. Regardless of the crisis, we have so far been able to continue our ambitious project to extend the airside terminal area, for example to create extra space for the baggage reclaim area, airport travellers and passport control,” says Thomas Woldbye.

The future of the project depends on sufficient compensation for costs and investments in connection with the aeronautical infrastructure.

Read the [announcement](#) in full.